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VOLUME XX

THE TUDORS IN FRENCH DRAMA

A Portion of a Dissertation submitted to the Board of
University Studies of The Johns Hopkins University
in conformity with the requirements for the
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

1930

BY
L. ALFREDA HILL

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CHAPTER I

THE FAME OF THE TUDORS

Sixteenth-century England under the reign of the Tudors marks an epoch in European history; during that period, thanks to the strong and able rule of its sovereigns, England emerged from obscurity and medievalism to become a modern state, one of the first powers of Europe. The Tudors have set their ineradicable stamp upon their country, from the date of the accession of Henry VII, the first monarch, in 1485, until the death of Queen Elizabeth in 1603; their strong, personal rule, their wise administration of government, their patronage of the arts, and their devotion to nationalism gained for England a position of prime importance among other European states.¹ Today we speak of Tudor literature, of Tudor architecture, of Tudor government, as designating a distinct type evolved under their reign.

The dynasts themselves came from no very direct line of royal descent: their founder Owen Tudor, a faithful Lancastrian who belonged to a Welsh family of great antiquity, married Catherine of Valois, widow of Henry V, by whom he had three sons; the eldest, Edmund, created Earl of Richmond in 1453, married Lady Margaret Beaufort, heiress of John of Gaunt, by whom he had one son, Henry, who was later to become Henry VII of England. By the deaths of the Lancastrian monarch and his son, the young Henry Tudor, Earl of Richmond, whose father, Edmund Tudor, had also died, became head of the Lancastrian party. After a stay in Brittany where his uncle, the Earl of Pembroke, deemed it wise to send him to escape the attacks of the Yorkists during the Wars of the Roses, Richmond returned auspiciously to England to fight the victorious Battle of Bosworth Field against Richard III and make himself king under the title of Henry VII (1485-1509). The

¹ See Arthur D. Innes, *England under the Tudors* (vol. IV of *A History of England* in 6 vols. General editor: C. W. C. Oman, London, Methuen, 1905), and Lewis Einstein, *Tudor Ideals*, New York, Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1921.

monarch's firm policy settled a country worn to exhaustion by civil strife. His son, Henry VIII (1509-1547), continued the work of national development and established the Anglican Church. Under his children, Edward VI (1547-1553), Mary (1553-1558), and especially Elizabeth (1558-1603), England assumed those aspects of progress and prosperity, of enlightenment and culture, which characterize modern civilization. Energy and vigor abounded; a new world of mysteries challenged the hardy seafarer; and life held a tang that made men revel in the present. It is not surprising, therefore, that the fame of the Tudors has survived to the present day, and that it early found expression in the literature of England itself and of other countries.

M. Georges Ascoli in a recent study² has shown us what the Frenchman of the sixteenth century knew of his English neighbor and in what esteem he held the Tudor monarchs. The results of his work, which have shed much light on the Anglo-French relations of that period, have served once more to show what a mighty power the Tudors swayed in sixteenth-century European policies. Henry VII upon his death was mourned in French as well as in English circles for the peace he had brought to both countries. His son Henry VIII in joining against Louis XII occasioned many poems of no flattering tone; but on his coming to the Meeting of the Cloth of Gold comment became more kindly: Marot in a ballad on the subject expressed the wish that peace and tranquility might issue from the contact, but his wishes were destined to remain unfulfilled, for Henry soon continued negotiations with Charles V. In 1535 the French expressed heart-felt sympathy for the execution of Sir Thomas More, and in the following year, at the beheading of Anne Boleyn, appeared a lengthy poem³ on that event, written by Lancelot de Carles, secretary of Castelnau, Bishop of Tarbes.

If the reigns of Edward and Mary Tudor passed almost entirely uncommented on by their French contemporaries, their successor Elizabeth, with her illustrious cousin, the Queen of Scots, gave rise, on the other hand, to volumes of encomium and

² *La Grande-Bretagne devant l'opinion française depuis la guerre de Cent Ans jusqu'à la fin du XVI^e siècle*, Paris, J. Gamber, 1927.

³ *Poème sur la mort d'Anne Boleyn*, 1536. M. Ascoli has printed it in the appendix of his book, pp. 232-273.

vituperation from the pens of such men as Ronsard, du Bellay, Brantôme, Robert Garnier, Michel de l'Hospital, Jacques Grévin, Pasquier, du Bartas, d'Aubigné, and scores of other writers.⁴

Mary Queen of Scots, daughter of Marie de Guise, brought up at the French court and at an early age affianced to François, eldest son of Henri II, has ever been a subject for French authors. Her beauty evoked sonnets from Ronsard, anagrams from Jean de la Taille, and enthusiastic descriptions from Brantôme. After her return to Scotland when some authors accused her of Darnley's murder, others hastily rose in her defense; when Buchanan's diatribe against Mary was translated into French by the protestant Camus and circulated throughout the country, Brantôme challenged the statements, declared every one of them false and stoutly upheld Mary's innocence.⁵

Although a great outburst of sympathy was poured forth by the French upon the royal prisoner held in England, Elizabeth Tudor nevertheless received during her reign a goodly share of praise and admiration from French authors. Brantôme, after he had conducted Mary Stuart to Scotland in 1561, returned to France via London and described his enjoyment of Elizabeth's gracious hospitality. Ronsard lauded her personal attractions and her wisdom in government; Jacques Grévin, the dramatist, in 1567 found it necessary, because of his protestant faith, to take refuge in England, and at that time whiled away long dreary hours writing in Elizabeth's honor. Similar verses of praise came from other protestant writers, especially Agrippa d'Aubigné in his *Tragiques*.⁶

What reason had the French for their intense interest in the government of England? In the first place, Elizabeth was a monarch of interesting character, energetic and vigorous; in the second place, that monarch was a woman, and to the Frenchman of the sixteenth century, interested in questions of political theory and philosophy, that fact was vital. The ideas of John Leslie's work of 1569, discussing the principle of the legality of

⁴ For a thorough treatment of this material see Ascoli, *op. cit.*, pp. 131-151.

⁵ Cf. Belleforest, *L'Innocence de la tres illustre, tres chaste et debonnaire princesse, Madame Marie Royne d'Escosse*, 1572.

⁶ Cf. Part III, *La Chambre Dorée*, in which d'Aubigné praises Elizabeth's firm rule in both domestic and foreign affairs.

government by woman,⁷ appeared four years later in the French work of David Chambre: *Discours de la legitime succession des femmes aux possessions de leurs parents, et du gouvernement des princesses aux empires et aux royaumes*. In 1580 Leslie himself published at Reims, with a clever dedication to Catherine de' Medici, his views on the justification of women's rule, *De illustrium faeminarum in republica administranda ac ferendis legibus autoritate*. The French with their regard for the Salic Law⁸ showed their natural curiosity in any theory so different from their own, and perhaps it is this curiosity that made them look upon Elizabeth's reign with such eager interest.

The trial and execution of the Queen of Scots brought a shower of brochures and pamphlets. Estienne Pasquier in his *Recherches de la France*⁹ recounted Mary's spirited reply to her judges; Pomponne de Bellièvre, special ambassador to England, attempted to dissuade Elizabeth from taking the fatal step,¹⁰ and when all such endeavors failed, authors burst forth against the stony-hearted monarch who could sanction so heinous a crime. Brantôme pathetically described Mary's last moments, as did Guillaume du Vair in his *Oraison Funèbre*; Adam Blackwood circulated his *Martyre de la Roynie d'Escoce, douairière de France*, with an appeal to all Christian princes to make war on the monster Elizabeth, incarnation of every wickedness and vice.

The seventeenth century continued its interest in the Tudor dynasts: Madame de La Fayette gave a portrait of Queen Elizabeth in her *Princesse de Clèves* (1678), and Fontenelle in his *Dialogues des Morts* (1685) used several members of the royal family as his interlocutors. For example, we find Queen Elizabeth interviewing her French suitor, le Duc d'Alençon, Anne Boleyn discussing feminine attractions with la Duchesse de

⁷ A defence of the Honour of the right high, mighty and noble princess Marie—with a declaration as well of her right, title and interest to the succession of the crown of England, as that the regiment of women is conformable to the law of God and nature.

⁸ Cf. Guillaume du Vair, *Suasion de l'arrest donnée au parlement pour la manutention de la loi salique*, *Œuvres Complètes*, 1641, pp. 601-607.

⁹ Edition of 1621, VI, ch. XV, p. 502.

¹⁰ *Harangue faicte à la Roynie d'Angleterre pour la desmouvoir de n'entreprendre aucune iurisdiction sur la Roynie d'Escoce*.

Valentinois, and Mary, sister of Henry VIII, debating on social position with Anne de Bretagne.

At the threshold of the eighteenth century the historians Leti, Larrey, and Rapin-Thoyras¹¹ were interested in this period of English history. All of them liberals in their political views, they found it necessary to publish their works in Holland, where they might express their opinions with greater freedom. A little later came Voltaire with his *Henriade* and his *Dictionnaire philosophique*, each containing a eulogy of Queen Elizabeth. Nor did the nineteenth century with its enthusiasm for the historical novel forget the Tudor sovereigns.

In the foregoing brief résumé we have endeavored to point out the general interest of the French in the Tudor dynasts. What rôle, then, did the theater play in presenting the Tudors to the French people? The drama, most popular of all literary genres, could not fail to have its part in this presentation of the Tudor monarchs to their French neighbors, and we shall now try to examine what influence the drama has exerted in acquainting the great French public with Tudor history.

Although the seventeenth century has been characterized as showing an interest particularly in subjects of Greek and Roman antiquity, we find at least ten plays dealing with English history of the Tudor period. In the year 1601 with the *Escossoise* of Antoine de Montchrestien we have the first manifestation of interest in the Tudor dynasty. This tragedy, which portrays the last hours of Mary Queen of Scots, antedates by nearly forty years any other dramatic work concerning the Tudors. Toward the middle of the century La Calprenède added to the repertory with one tragedy on the Lady Jane Grey affair, entitled *Ieanne Reyne d'Angleterre* (1638), and another on the romance of Elizabeth and her favorite, Essex, entitled *Le Comte d'Essex*

¹¹ For a treatment of their work see Joseph Dedieu, *Montesquieu et la tradition politique anglaise en France*, Paris, Librairie Victor Lecoffre, J. Gabalda & Cie., 1909.

Gregorio Leti (1630-1701) published a history of Elizabeth at Amsterdam in 1693 which passed into several French translations.

Isaac de Larrey (1638-1719) published his *Histoire d'Angleterre* at Rotterdam, 1697-1713.

Rapin de Thoyras (1661-1725) published his *Histoire d'Angleterre* at the Hague in 1724.

(1639). The former subject had no reverberations until the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, but the latter evoked tragedies from Thomas Corneille and the abbé Claude Boyer, both in the same year, 1678. The Mary Queen of Scots theme, initiated by Montchrestien, was resumed by Regnault in his *Marie Stuart, Reyne d'Ecosse* (1639) and later by Edme Boursault under the same title in 1683. Henry VIII also received consideration in the tragedy of Puget de La Serre called *Thomas Morus, ou le Triomphe de la foy & la constance* (1642). All the Tudor dynasts except Henry VII and Edward VI, who were not to be treated until the nineteenth century, came to the attention of seventeenth-century playwrights.

Although Montchrestien's tragedy belongs to a previous period, to the dramatic school of the sixteenth-century authors, Jodelle and Garnier, the other productions fall into the school of seventeenth-century classicism, which slowly evolved toward 1650—tragedies of simple, logical plot, of clear character delineation, of deep psychological penetration and written in sonorous alexandrines.¹²

In the early part of the eighteenth century, interest in the Tudors did not generally find expression in the drama; only one play, the *Marie Stuart* (1734) of François Tronchin, was produced. But toward the end of the century came more dramatic works: the Jane Grey story was resuscitated by La Place in 1777 and ten years later by Madame de Staël; Count Guibert wrote a tragedy on Anne Boleyn in 1777, though it was not published until 1820; Marie-Joseph Chénier gave his portrait of the Tyrant in *Henri VIII* (1791); another Mary Stuart play, this one by the obscure author, Doigny du Ponceau, though written in the latter part of the eighteenth century did not reach the public until 1820. In fact, only two of the eighteenth-century productions actually reached the stage—the tragedy of Tronchin on Mary Queen of Scots and that of Chénier on Henry VIII. The Tudors do not come into the public eye to make a real and permanent impression until the nineteenth century.

With the melodrama of the early nineteenth century these

¹² For a treatment of French classicism see Emile Faguet's *Drame Ancien, Drame Moderne*, Paris, Armand Colin, 1909, and C. H. C. Wright's *French Classicism*, Cambridge, Harvard Press, 1920.

English dynasts veritably pervade the French theaters.¹³ Henry VII, not treated heretofore, makes his début before the Parisian footlights in *vaudevilles* and *dramas historiques*, relating the impostures of Lambert Simnel and Perkin Warbeck, which arose during his reign before he could secure a peaceful realm to his posterity. In this period Henry VIII receives more complete treatment: the seventeenth century had told only of his repudiating Catherine of Aragon, the late eighteenth century had given two dramas recounting the death of Anne Boleyn; now with the nineteenth century come not only repetitions of these themes, in the *Thomas Morus* (1826) of Drap-Arnaud and the *Anne Boulén* (1821) of "Frédéric" (Dupetit Méré), but plays on Henry's other wives—the *Catherine Howard* (1834) of Alexandre Dumas père and *Les Trois Catherine* (1830) of Duport and Monnais. The Lady Jane Grey theme reappears in plays by Leblanc (1834), Alexandre Soumet (1844), Carénou (1850) and Nus and Brot (1856).

Foreign literatures did not fail to exert their influence on the French treatment of the Tudors. In the first decade of the nineteenth century, Schiller's *Maria Stuart* had been discussed in Parisian salons; Madame de Staël had given an enthusiastic analysis of certain scenes in her *De l'Allemagne* (1810), and in 1820 Pierre-Antoine Lebrun produced a successful adaptation of the tragedy at the Comédie Française. Lebrun's work started the vogue of making adaptations of Schiller's work, and the whole nineteenth century saw successive repetitions of the theme, not only in tragedies written for the professional stage, but also in dramatic productions intended for sectarian schools. In the latter works the character of Mary Stuart is purified, and she assumes all the characteristics of the religious martyr, resembling the type found earlier in the seventeenth-century Latin plays, performed by students of schools under the direction of the Jesuits and other religious orders. The Queen of Scots, so alluring to people's imaginations, became the subject also for

¹³ The historical verity of these productions is commented on in the *Journal de Paris* of December 15, 1815: "Depuis quelque temps les auteurs des Boulevards se sont lassés de nous donner des sujets d'invention; ils mettent maintenant l'histoire en pièce. Malheur à ceux qui croiront à leurs contes dramatiques; on court risque en voulant parler d'histoire de faire d'après eux d'étranges bévues."

many anonymous works; aspiring young authors who possessed more ambition than talent wrote tragedies on the misfortunes of Mary Stuart and thereby felt released from the dramatic urge. These plays, never publicly performed, and printed usually only at the author's expense, cannot be classed as real literature, but they serve to show the immense interest taken in Schiller's tragedy.

Besides the Mary Stuart theme, Schiller also in some measure influenced the French treatment of Henry VII. As has already been stated, the principal interest in the reign of this monarch proved to be the two impostures which confronted him toward the outset of his rule. Although the principal source of the plays on Lambert Simnel and Perkin Warbeck is an historical novel by Dorion, published in 1819, the *esquisse* of a tragedy on Warbeck which Schiller made in 1798, and which appeared in a French translation of Amable de Barante in 1821, exerted a certain influence on the French playwrights who within three years produced four plays on the subject: Picard and Empis gave *Lambert Simnel ou le Mannequin politique* (1827); Théaulon with other collaborators produced a *vaudeville*, *Perkins Warbec ou le Commis Marchand* (1827); Fontan the following year saw the performance of his *Perkins Warbec* at the Odéon, and in 1830 Simonnin with two other collaborators gave *Le Pâtissier Usurpateur*.

Not only Schiller, but Sir Walter Scott affected the fate of the Tudors in nineteenth-century French drama.¹⁴ His novel, *The Abbot*, underwent many adaptations at the hands of Pixérécourt and the other melodramatists, but, since that novel deals with a period in the life of Mary Queen of Scots prior to her intimate relations with Queen Elizabeth, it does not concern the present study. His *Kenilworth*, on the other hand, with its glowing picture of the pomp and pageantry of Elizabeth's reign, its love-story, its villain, and its dramatic dénouement, deals with the most important of the Tudor monarchs in such an engaging manner as to offer rich material for playwrights. Immediately after the appearance of the French translation in 1821, four authors began making adaptations for the stage:

¹⁴ For the influence of Scott on French drama see F. W. M. Draper, *The Rise and Fall of French Romantic Drama*, London, Constable, 1923, chap. II.

while Boirie and Lemaire made a melodrama for the Porte-Saint-Martin, Scribe composed a libretto for Auber's opera, and Victor Hugo started collaborating with Alexandre Soumet on a drama.

The Kenilworth episode brought a new theme on Queen Elizabeth into French drama, but it did not mean an abandonment of themes already treated. The Essex story, already used three times in the seventeenth-century classical tragedy by La Calprenède, Thomas Corneille, and the abbé Boyer, now took on more colorful details and romantic embroiderings in the nineteenth-century plays of Ancelot (*Elisabeth d'Angleterre*, 1829) and Couturier (*Le Comte d'Essex*, 1868).

Shakespeare's influence also, attested by Hugo, Gautier, and Dumas, though it does not show directly in any single play, is apparent in several, as will be pointed out in succeeding chapters. The general influence of the poet pervades the literature of this period, as is shown by the frequent allusions to his relations with the Tudor monarchs or to the nobles closely connected with the crown. In the concluding chapter we shall see to what extent he has been brought into plays dealing with the Tudor sovereigns, and in what measure historical facts have been distorted in order to introduce the great poet as an element of local color.

Not only the legitimate stage drew its material from this period of English history; the opera, too, found subjects in the study of Tudor dynasts. The Italian Felice Romani had written a libretto for Donizetti's *Anna Bolena* which Castil Blaze translated into French for French performances. Another Donizetti opera, this one on the Earl of Essex theme, with words by Salvador Cammarano, was translated into French by Etienne Monnier and produced at Rouen in 1841. Scribe collaborated with Mélesville for the libretto of Auber's *Leicester*, one of the *Kenilworth* adaptations which played at the Opéra Comique in 1823, and Théodore Anne wrote the words for Niedermeyer's *Marie Stuart*, played for the first time at the Théâtre de l'Académie Royale de Musique in 1844. A *scène lyrique* of Edmond Delière retold the story of Catherine Howard (1877). Apart from the entirely musical productions, we find music playing an important rôle also in the melodramas and the

romantic dramas. Snatches of song creep into Dumas' *Catherine Howard* and Hugo's *Marie Tudor*.

The seventeenth-century productions on the Tudors could be easily classed as classical tragedies—the five acts, the “style noble,” the alexandrines, the conception of the tragic character—all these elements conformed to that category. And the eighteenth-century productions followed their classical models. But the nineteenth-century plays do not so easily fall into any one *genre*. Besides a host of *mélodrames*, we have *vaudevilles*, *scènes historiques*, and romantic dramas à la Dumas and Victor Hugo, which no longer abide by the regular forms and which possess certain elements different from the old conception of dramatic technique. The *mélodrame*, an outgrowth of the eighteenth-century popular tragedy,¹⁵ cultivates the horrible, mingles the comic and the tragic, stresses external action, and provides the happy ending in which virtue is always rewarded and vice overwhelmed. In melodrama we have no real opposition of two forces, each of which contains an element of right and an element of wrong. Alexander Lacey¹⁶ thus distinguishes the melodrama from real tragedy:

There is nothing of that sense of awe in the presence of something heroic and grand, of something in human nature that conquers death, which we are conscious of in real tragedy. The hero or heroine represents nothing universal or profound in human nature.

Melodrama uses all the stage conventions, the monologue, the aside, the stage-whisper, eavesdroppings, the revelation of important secrets, lost letters, presentiments of danger, and “la voix du sang.” We do not fail to have a spy, a midnight scene in a dungeon, a conspiracy, secret passages or stairways and

¹⁵ See Jules Marsan, “Le Mélodrame et Guilbert de Pixérécourt,” *Revue d'Histoire littéraire de la France*, 1900, pp. 196-197: “C'est vers un théâtre populaire, en effet, que nous conduit l'évolution un peu confuse de l'art dramatique au dix-huitième siècle. Le mélodrame historique—intrigues compliquées où s'ébattent les plus invraisemblables fantoches, en des décors évocateurs de vagues souvenirs—est bien le véritable terme de cette marche de la tragédie s'adressant à un public de plus en plus nombreux renonçant aux fines analyses de jadis, avide de mouvement sous prétexte de vie.”

¹⁶ Alexander Lacey, *Pixérécourt and the French Romantic Drama*, University of Toronto Press, 1928, p. 14.

caverns as hiding-places. The characters, too, differ from those found in seventeenth-century productions: the hero is no longer the classical hero, not too good and not too bad, who has committed some fault for which Fate punishes him more than he deserves; the hero of the melodrama is the paragon of all virtues, over-courageous, and always victorious in the struggle with the villain.

The romantic drama, which evolves toward 1830, has been shown to be in most respects a direct outgrowth of the melodrama,¹⁷ with its similar characterization, its external action, the use of grottoes and caverns, and the presence of the sinister executioner.¹⁸ Like the melodrama it offers "a feast for the eyes"; costumes and settings provide a part of that "couleur locale" which so preoccupied the romantics, and from a description of Hugo's *Amy Robsart* or *Marie Tudor* we can judge how gorgeously the plays were mounted. The romantics, like Pixérécourt, wanted to make the past live again, but beyond picturesque details and historical costumes we rarely find the reconstruction of the Tudor period. Very often, in fact, the historical setting serves merely as a screen behind which the authors set forth their political views. For the cry of the romantics is "Liberty!" In the plays on Henry VII, for example, we have allusions to the divorce problem, the political situation, or the anti-clerical movement of the early nineteenth century rather than to Tudor history.

The change of dramatic form brought a change also in theaters, and the 1820's saw the Tudors migrate from the Théâtre Français to the Boulevards. At the Gaîté, the Ambigu-Comique, and the Porte-Saint-Martin the Tudors of the melodrama, at the Gymnase (Théâtre Madame) the Tudors of the *vaudeville*, and again at the Porte-Saint-Martin the Tudors of romantic drama, came to popular notice. The romantics, to be sure, had tried to make a reputation at the Théâtre Français; Hugo had written in verse, hoping to make a permanent literary contribution to French drama, but both he and Dumas had experienced

¹⁷ See Lacey, *op. cit.*, chaps. 2-6, and F. W. M. Draper, *op. cit.*, pp. 169-170; J. F. Mason, *The Melodrama in France from the Revolution to the Beginning of Romantic Drama*, partially published, Johns Hopkins University Dissertation, 1911, chapter VI.

¹⁸ Found in *Catherine Howard*, *Marie Tudor*, *Lord Surrey*.

such antagonistic feeling with the actors, Mlle Mars and Firmin, that they gave their *Marie Tudor* and *Catherine Howard* to the Porte-Saint-Martin, home of the "bon gros mélo," where Marie Dorval, Mlle Georges, Bocage, and Lockroy delighted their popular audiences. The identity of the theaters forges one more link between melodrama and romantic drama.

Of course, during this period the plays performed were not all published. Alexandre Soumet's *Emilia*, though produced at the Théâtre Français, never came out in print; Ancelot's *Warbeck* enjoyed no more than a reading by the committee; Charles Brifaut's *Jeanne Gray* enjoyed a performance but no publication, and the *Jane Gray* of Emile Bonnechose had neither. Alfred de Musset's plan for a *Comte d'Essex* to which Egli¹⁹ alludes, and Victor Hugo's plan for a tragedy on Mary Stuart²⁰ never materialized.

In the twentieth century almost no dramas have appeared on the Tudors. Two short plays on the Thomas More theme, a sensational melodrama on one of Henry VIII's amours, and an adaptation of the Baroness Orczy's novel, *The Tangled Skein*, performed at the Théâtre Sarah Bernhardt, complete the list. And since the trend at present is away from the historical play to the drama of ideas and impressions, there seems no probability of their returning soon to the French stage.

After considering all the subjects presented, one is forced to admit that the Tudors have evoked no masterpieces in French drama, no work of universal fame like Schiller's *Maria Stuart*. While the Queen of Scots theme became in France too much a vehicle for sectarian propaganda, the Mary Tudor subject degenerated into pure melodrama, as did many of the plays on Henry VIII. The Essex theme has, on the whole, received the most successful treatment, inspiring not only La Calprenède's best work, but one of Thomas Corneille's most celebrated tragedies.

The foregoing survey of French plays which have been produced concerning the Tudors indicates their fame in French

¹⁹ Edmond Egli, *Schiller et le Romantisme Français*, Paris, Gamber, 1927, vol. II, p. 373.

²⁰ Mentioned by Karl Kipka in his *Maria Stuart im Drama der Welt-literatur*, Leipzig, 1907, p. 405.

dramatic literature. In the following chapters we shall see what has been their fate, how they have been treated by various dramatists in different periods, and what purposes they have served in certain cases. Since by viewing each monarch separately we can best perceive how each has fared in French drama, the subject will be divided according to sovereigns rather than chronologically, and the plays which concern them studied in detail. From such a study we shall be able to judge to just what extent French dramatists have reflected the Tudor Age, and how exact a picture they have given of sixteenth-century England.

CHAPTER VII

ELIZABETH AND ESSEX

Queen Elizabeth's destiny in the French theater seems to be that of third party in a love triangle. As she came between Leicester and Amy Robsart, and later between Norfolk and Mary Queen of Scots, so now we shall see her, in a number of plays, come between the Earl of Essex and the young lady of his affections, whose name changes according to various versions of the romance. Robert Devereux, second Earl of Essex, first came to court as a precocious youth of ten, under the protection of his new step-father, the Earl of Leicester; even as a child he pleased the queen, and soon after the completion of his studies at Cambridge received an appointment as General of the Horse. But Essex's love of glory and his inordinate vanity soon made him jealous of certain courtiers—Raleigh, Robert Cecil, and Charles Blount. With the last-named gentleman he even went so far as to fight a duel, whereat Elizabeth is said to have cried, "By God's death, it were fitting someone should take him down and teach him better manners or there were no rule with him." Bored with court-life, Essex ¹ in 1589 ran off to Portugal to the aid of Don Antonio against Philip II, whence the angry queen immediately summoned him to return. He further enraged his sovereign by a secret marriage with Walsingham's daughter, Frances, the widow of Sir Philip Sidney, but he became reconciled with Elizabeth a few months afterwards, and secured the command of the English troops sent to the aid of Henry of Navarre at Rouen. Later, in the seizure of Cadiz in 1596, he distinguished himself, but always the old sense of jealousy marred his complete happiness at court; his new grievance lay in the raising of Admiral Howard of Effingham to the earldom of Nottingham, a title which gave him precedence over Essex

¹ Cf. Camden, *op. cit.*, p. 430: "Robert, Earl of Essex . . . a very young Gentleman, who out of his eager thirst after military Glory, his Hatred against the Spaniards, and a commiseration towards Don Antonio, despising the Pleasures of the Court, had put himself to Sea, without the Queen's Knowledge, yea to the incurring of her Displeasure."

until Elizabeth raised her favorite to the position of Earl Marshal. Yet no sooner did Essex regain the monarch's favor than he lost it again by abetting the marriage of his friend, Southampton, with Elizabeth Vernon, and by his own scandalous affairs with various women of the court. But it was the Irish expedition that brought about Essex's downfall. In March, 1599, the earl sailed for Ireland to meet the rebel Tyrone, but after a few first successes the expedition came to nought; Essex came to terms with Tyrone and returned unexpectedly to London where the enraged queen ordered him to undergo trial for his misconduct. Essex finally secured his liberty, but could not rest content without making an effort to regain his former influence at court; when repeated messages to the queen failed to evoke any response, he determined to make a show of force. His conspiracy, however, failed miserably and served only to bring the rash young nobleman to the scaffold in the thirty-fourth year of his age.

Popular fancy has not failed to add much romance to the tale of Elizabeth and Essex: the queen is said to have given him a ring, with the promise that whenever he found himself in danger, if he sent her the ring he would thereby secure her protection. Essex sent the ring, but it did not reach the queen in time for her to grant his pardon. The story must be considered apocryphal since it does not appear in any contemporary accounts of the Tudor queen's reign,² but so popular has it become that we find it in all but one of the French dramas written about the Earl of Essex.

As La Calprenède pointed the way to French dramatists in writing about Mary Tudor (*Ieanne d'Angleterre*, 1638), he again stands as the pioneer in presenting the Essex story to his compatriots.³ In 1639 appeared his *Comte d'Essex*,⁴ dedicated

² Not until the middle of the century did actual books appear in England telling the ring story: about 1650 was published a *History of the Most Renowned Queen Elizabeth and her favorite Essex, a Romance*; in 1658 appeared Francis Osborne's *Traditional Memoirs of the Reigns of Queen Elizabeth and King James I*; in 1688 the *Mémoires* of Louis Aubéry, sieur du Maurier, told the story of Nottingham's delaying the ring's passing into Elizabeth's hands.

³ Cf. the Spanish drama of Coello, *El Conde del Sex* (1638).

⁴ Published in 1639; no date of *privilège* is given; *achevé d'imprimer*, May 30.

to the Princesse Guimené⁵ to whom he writes a most flattering eulogy.⁶ The first scene shows Essex in disgrace after the Irish expedition, though the author does not make clear to the audience in just what the earl's guilt consists, since Essex denies all charges made against him in the affair with Tyrone and in his march with armed forces upon London. Essex remains confident of keeping the queen's favor but his friend Southampton⁷ (Soubtantonne) bids him consider the sovereign's power:

La puissance des Roys peust estre bornée
 Leur Caprice à leur gré fait nostre destinée,
 Nous sommes leur iouet & l'inconstante main
 Qui nous hausse aujourd'huy nous rabesse demain.

(Act I, scene V)

Moreover, the queen's ambition rises above all her other characteristics:

Cet esprit remuant, superbe, ambitieux;
 De quelque passion que son ame s'emporte
 Si son ambition ne sera pas plus forte,
 Le desir de regner estouffera tousiours
 Quelques ardeurs qu'elle ayt le soing de ses amours. (*ibid.*)

The act closes with the arrest of both Essex and Southampton.

After this first show of firmness, Elizabeth would now treat her favorite leniently and therefore confidentially⁸ dispatches Lady Cecil to promise him that at a sign of his humility the

⁵ Anne de Rohan, princesse de Guimené (Guémené).

⁶ "I'offre vne excellente Reyne à vne excellente Princesse. . . . Si le Ciel eut adiousté à ses bonnes qualités vne partie des vostres, il en eut fait son chef d'œuvre, & que s'il eut pourueue des beautez de l'ame et du corps que vous possédez avec tant d'auantage, Nostre Comte n'eut pas esté ingrat aux preuues qu'il auoit receues de son amitié."

⁷ Henry Wriothesley (1573-1624), third Earl of Southampton, was the patron of Shakespeare, who dedicated to him his *Venus and Adonis* (1593) and *Lucrece* (1594). Southampton lost his favor with the queen by his secret marriage to Elizabeth Vernon. He joined Essex's conspiracy, was imprisoned in the Tower and brought to trial with him February 19, 1601. Southampton's death-sentence was commuted to life-imprisonment, and upon the accession of James I in 1603 he regained his liberty.

⁸ Elizabeth says:

Mais surtout ne mets point mon honneur au hazard
 Et dissimule bien que ce soit de ma part. (Act II, scene II)

queen will restore him to her favor. Elizabeth does not know that Lady Cecil has formerly been the mistress of Essex and been abandoned by him; unwittingly she puts her lady-in-waiting to a severe test. Lady Cecil decides to interview Essex, but to deceive him if possible, so as to avenge herself. Essex insists once more upon his innocence.

In Act III Essex, appearing before his judges, shows no bending of his haughty spirit and even becomes accuser in charging his enemy Cecil as "partisan d'Espagne." Both he and Southampton are convicted of treason and condemned to death. At news of the sentence, Elizabeth puts aside all thought of her own glory to dwell only on her love for the prisoner:

Que ce superbe bruit qui me rendoit si vaine
Que ces rares vertus d'une si grande Reine,
Cedent honteusement aus maximes d'amour
Et que tout le passé se dissipe en un iour,
Pourveu que mon repos se trouue dans ma faute
Ie ne me pique plus d'une gloire si haute. (Act IV, scene I)

When her *suivante*, Alix, reminds her of Essex's several lapses of conduct, the distracted monarch can only answer:

Il peut bien conspirer, il peut bien me trahir
Il peut me mepriser, ie ne le puis hayr. (*ibid.*)

In a second interview with the prisoner, Lady Cecil secures from him the ring which will bring the queen's pardon. After a brief mental conflict in which she has been tempted to keep the ring and in this way obtain her vengeance, Lady Cecil resolves to save her former lover, but on the way she meets her husband who stays her footsteps. Elizabeth, angry that her proud captive has not deigned to send the ring, feels pacified at the news of his execution, but her majestic calm is broken when Lady Cecil, herself at the point of death, brings her the ring and tells how she has failed to deliver it; Elizabeth can only fall back weakly, crying:

Ie perds le sentiment, & mon coeur s'affoiblit
Pour la dernière fois, meime moy sur mon lit.
(Act V, scene VII)

In regard to the ring-story La Calprenède states expressly in his *Au Lecteur*:

Si vous trouvez quelque chose dans ceste Tragedie que vous n'ayez point leu dans les Historiens Anglois, croyez que ie ne l'ay point inuenté, & que ie n'ay rien escrit que sur de bonnes memoires que i'en auois receues de personnes de condition, & qui ont peut-estre part à l'Histoire.

It is a misstatement, then, to assert that La Calprenède "invented the ring story."⁹ The tale belongs to popular romances and modern critics¹⁰ find an allusion to it as early as 1623 in an English tragi-comedy of John Webster, entitled *The Devil's Law Case*,

Let me die
In the distraction of that worthy princess
Who loathèd food, and sleep, and ceremony,
For thought of losing that brave gentleman
She would fain have saved, had not a false conveyance
Expressed him stubborn-hearted: let me sink
Where neither man nor memory may e'er find me.
(Act III, scene III)

The editor says of this passage:¹¹

Here I think there is a manifest allusion to the closing scene of Queen Elizabeth's life and to what Mr. Lodge calls 'the well-known, but weakly authenticated tale of the Countess of Nottingham and the ring.'

Where La Calprenède picked up the story we do not know, but very evidently it grew out of court gossip and "an effort to reconcile the historical facts of the queen's affection for Essex and her signing his death warrant."¹² The Frères Parfaict¹³ in their analysis of this tragedy have confused the ring story with some other account when they state that "le comte est

⁹ Clarence D. Brenner makes such a statement in *L'Histoire Nationale dans la tragédie française*, University of California Publications in Modern Philology, vol. 14, no. 3, p. 210.

¹⁰ Cf. Walther Baerwolff, *Der Graf von Essex im deutschen Drama*, Stuttgart, 1920, p. 10; Richard Schiedermaier, *Der Graf von Essex in der Literatur*, Kaiserlautern, 1908, p. 33.

¹¹ Rev. Alexander Dyce, *The Works of John Webster*, London, Maxon, 1857; see also F. L. Lucas, *Complete works of John Webster*, New York, Houghton Mifflin, 1928, vol. II, pp. 343-344.

¹² H. C. Lancaster, "La Calprenède Dramatist," *Modern Philology*, July, 1920, p. 137. Professor Lancaster suggests that the story may have arisen also from the fact that Henry VIII gave Cranmer a ring which should save him from punishment.

¹³ *Histoire du Théâtre François*, vol. V, p. 477.

possesseur de la moitié d'une bague . . . il donne la moitié de la bague à Madame Cécile."

As in his *Ieanne d'Angleterre*, La Calprenède uses historical names loosely: he makes Cecile, Secretaire d'Estat and le Comte de Salisbury two separate characters,¹⁴ whereas we know from history that Cecil was himself made Earl of Salisbury in 1605 and that there had been no earl of that title since Richard Neville (1428-1471).

Although Essex is the central figure of the tragedy with his ambitious plans for ruling the state, Queen Elizabeth, with her struggle between her love for the prisoner and her duty as queen, offers much more psychological interest. The dramatist has pictured her as rather old, and as a queen, not breaking out in jealousy when Lady Cecil reveals Essex's former love-affair with her, but completely broken down at the realization that his punishment has been undeserved. The importance of facial expression in the rôles of the protagonists has recently been studied¹⁵ and the conclusion reached, that La Calprenède is a predecessor of Racine in his endeavor to make all references to the human face an integral part of the action. In her prisoner's face Elizabeth believes she sees his guilt written,

Tu paslis desloyal, & le remors imprime,
Sur ton coupable front les marques de ton crime,
(Act I, scene I)

and once convinced of that fact, she proceeds resolutely against him.

The defects of the play lie in the failure to give a clear exposition and in the introduction of Lady Cecil's rôle too late¹⁶ to be well co-ordinated with the rest of the plot. But in spite of these faults, *Le Comte d'Essex* has been judged the best of La

¹⁴ La Calprenède here led his successor, Thomas Corneille, to change the name of Essex's friend Southampton to Salisbury, thus incurring the censure of Voltaire in his *Remarques sur le Comte d'Essex*, *Œuvres*, ed. Moland, Paris, Garnier, 1880, vol. XXXII, p. 327. But Voltaire himself makes a slip of the same kind in enumerating Elizabeth's favorites: "Le comte de Leicester succéda dans la faveur à Dudley." *Loc. cit.*, p. 325.

¹⁵ Cf. Maurice Baudin, "Le Visage humain dans la tragédie de la Calprenède", *Modern Language Notes*, February, 1930.

¹⁶ Lady Cecil does not appear until Act II, scene II.

Calprenède's dramatic productions and served later as an inspiration to Thomas Corneille in his tragedy of the same name.

In the forty years which elapsed between La Calprenède's production and Corneille's, the French theater had changed, writers of classical tragedy had come to accept Racine as their model, and consequently Thomas Corneille's *Comte d'Essex* falls into this new category:

Par la simplicité des situations, par la conduite de l'intrigue, qui est réduite presque à rien et dont les rares péripéties sont amenées par les événements extérieurs, *Ariane* et le *Comte d'Essex* pourraient être comparés même à *Bérénice*.¹⁷

In keeping with such technique, he reduces the number of characters to five: ¹⁸ Elizabeth; Essex; the Duchesse d'Irton, Essex's love; Salisbury, his friend; and Cecil, his enemy. The character of Essex is still further exculpated so that there remains no question of his innocence; what the queen and his enemies have taken for an uprising against the state has been nothing more than a desperate attempt to keep his adored Henriette from marrying the Duc d'Irton. Henriette, though much in love with Essex, has married the duke so as to preserve Essex's favor with his sovereign. Although he departs widely from history in his conception of Essex, Corneille abides by sober fact in the conclusion of the tragedy by omitting the ring story, which he says he did not find in Camden.

In the opening scene, Essex's friend, Salisbury, warns him that his enemies are working his ruin, and begs him to show more moderation in his actions. But Essex, proud and contemptuous, cannot alter his haughty demeanor, and when Cecil summons him before Elizabeth to allay her suspicions, he boldly accuses Cecil of inciting the queen against him. Goaded by such contempt, Cecil now prepares to act in earnest against his rival. The second act shows us Queen Elizabeth—by far the most interesting character of the tragedy—confessing her love for the young noble; her varying moods manifest themselves in her successive speeches: the first is merely an avowal of her passion:

¹⁷ Gustave Reynier, *Thomas Corneille, sa vie et son œuvre*, Paris, Hachette, p. 170.

¹⁸ There are, besides, the unimportant Capitaine des gardes, and Tilney, Elizabeth's *suivante*.

Il a trop de ma bouche, il a trop de mes yeux
 Appris qu'il est, l'ingrat! ce que j'aime le mieux.

(Act II, scene I)

Then she begins to show irritation at Essex's actions:

Qu'il craigne cependant de me trop irriter:
 Je contrains ma colère à ne pas éclater;
 Mais quelquefois l'amour qu'un long mépris outrage,
 Las enfin de souffrir, se convertit en rage. (*ibid.*)

Yet if he would show the slightest sign of affection for her, she would gladly forgive him; the moment his presence is announced her emotions surge:

C'est lui de mes bontés qui doit chercher l'appui,
 Le péril le regarde, et je crains plus que lui. (Act II, scene V)

But Essex refuses to show that sign of affection so eagerly sought, and she angrily delivers him to the council who condemn him. She is thoroughly roused at the report of his proud bearing during the trial:

Mon bras, lent à punir, suspendoit la tempête:
 Il me pousse à l'éclat; il païra de sa tête. (Act III, scene I)

After this stern decree she breaks down and sends both her confidant, Tilney, and Salisbury to urge his manifesting some sign of repentance so that she may forgive him. The Duchesse d'Irton finally reveals to Elizabeth that she is the queen's rival and tries to explain Essex's actions on the day of her marriage. Elizabeth, after an outburst of jealous passion, once more lets her love gain the ascendancy, and once more promises forgiveness at a show of repentance on the part of Essex. But neither Tilney, his friend, Salisbury, nor even his beloved Henriette can shake the earl from his resolution to die, since with Henriette married, life holds no promise for him. In the final act, Elizabeth determines to spare Essex, even though he has not sued for her pardon, but her message arrives too late; at news of her favorite's death she collapses:

Faisons que, d'un infâme et rigoureux supplice,
 Les honneurs du tombeau réparent l'injustice.
 Si le Ciel à mes vœux peut se laisser toucher,
 Vous n'aurez pas long tems à me la reprocher.
 (Act V, scene VIII)

The Frères Parfaict¹⁹ state that Thomas Corneille drew on much of La Calprenède's material for his tragedy, especially in the dénouement and in the character of the Duchesse d'Irton patterned after Lady Cecil. But Corneille differs in his conception of the protagonists: whereas La Calprenède had made Essex primarily ambitious, Thomas Corneille makes him proud; the Elizabeth of the former dramatist remains regal and does not display jealousy; the Elizabeth of Corneille is portrayed simply as a woman, who often forgets her queenly majesty to become the envious rival of Essex's adored lady; Henriette herself feels only love for Essex, while Lady Cecil was moved also by vengeance. Reynier²⁰ points out that, although the earl was probably considered the most important character by a seventeenth-century audience, his self-conceit and love of playing to the gallery soon grow unbearable and that therefore to the modern reader the queen's "états d'âme" offer a much more interesting study:

Elle aime Essex dans un âge où les passions sont d'autant plus fortes qu'elles ne peuvent pas espérer d'être payées de retour; quand bien même le jeune comte répondrait à sa tendresse, le haut rang où elle est placée serait toujours entre eux une barrière infranchissable. . . . Voilà enfin une vraie femme, qui souffre, qui aime, qui est lâche parce qu'elle aime, et non plus une héroïne de roman toujours juchée sur les grands sentiments, toujours maîtresse de son cœur!

Voltaire in his *Remarques sur le Comte d'Essex*²¹ points out how Thomas Corneille has departed from history and censures his use of certain names such as le duc d'Irton, which are in no way historical, or his confusion of Salisbury and Southampton; ²² he objects also to the fact that Essex dies on the scaffold without Elizabeth's having signed his death-warrant; ²³ in Elizabeth he can see only a ridiculous woman lacking force, elegance, and propriety; in Essex he tries to distinguish the historical figure, and failing in that, considers the whole play vague:

¹⁹ *Op. cit.*, vol. V, p. 479.

²⁰ *Op. cit.*, pp. 174, 176.

²¹ *Œuvres*, vol. XXXII, pp. 324-345.

²² See note 14, p. 137.

²³ "En Angleterre . . . la signature du monarque est indispensable, et il n'y a pas un seul exemple du contraire, excepté dans les temps de trouble où le souverain n'était pas reconnu." *Op. cit.*, p. 343.

Il me semble qu'il y a toujours quelque chose de louche, de confus, de vague, dans tout ce que les personnages de cette tragédie disent et font. . . . Que veut le comte d'Essex? que veut Elisabeth? quel est le crime du comte? est-il accusé faussement? est-il coupable?²⁴

La Harpe in his *Cours de Littérature*²⁵ makes similar objections. But should one not look for excellent dramatic technique, elegance of style, a truly tragic situation, and a penetrating character study rather than for mere historical facts in Thomas Corneille's production?

The tragedy, played in January, 1678, at the Hôtel de Bourgogne, enjoyed great popularity at the time of its first performance, in which la Champmeslé played the rôle of Elisabeth. More than any other of Thomas Corneille's plays it has survived its age; in the eighteenth century Adrienne Lecouvreur made Elisabeth's rôle popular, and we find chance references to the tragedy in literature: Rousseau in his *Lettre à D'Alembert*²⁶ mentions the *Comte d'Essex*, and Voltaire represents Candide²⁷ attending its performance on his arrival in Paris.

In 1678 its performances were so well attended that a rival theater, the Théâtre de Guénégaud, soon began playing a tragedy of the same name²⁸ composed by the abbé Claude Boyer.²⁹ Regarding the sources of this play, Boyer states in his preface:

²⁴ *Op. cit.*, pp. 335-336.

²⁵ Paris, Dupont, 1825, vol. VIII, pp. 149-157.

²⁶ *Œuvres Complètes*, Paris, Dalibon, 1824, vol. II, p. 38: "Plus j'y réfléchis et plus je trouve que tout ce qu'on met en représentation au théâtre on ne l'approche pas de nous, on l'en éloigne. Quand je vois le *Comte d'Essex* le règne d'Elisabeth se recule, à mes yeux, de dix siècles; et si l'on jouait un événement arrivé hier dans Paris, on me le ferait supposer du temps de Molière."

²⁷ *Œuvres Complètes*, ed. Moland, Paris, Garnier, 1879, vol. XXI, p. 189: "Candide fut très content d'une actrice qui faisait la reine Elisabeth dans une assez plate tragédie que l'on joue quelquefois."

²⁸ *Le Comte d'Essex*, tragédie par M. Boyer de l'Académie Française, à Paris, chez Charles Osmont, 1678; privilège le 18 mars; achevé d'imprimer, le 20 avril.

²⁹ Claude Boyer (1618-1698), born at Albi in Languedoc, author of many tragedies, pastorals, tragi-comedies, and operas. Although he became a member of the Académie Française in 1666, both Racine and Boileau continued to laugh at his fecundity. For a study of the abbé Boyer see: Ernst Göhlert, *Abbé Claude Boyer, ein Rivale Racines*, Leipzig, 1915.

Monsieur Corneille & moy nous avons puisé les idées d'un mesme sujet dans une mesme source: c'est à dire dans le Comte d'Essex que Monsieur de la Calprenède a fait il y a plus de trente ans. J'avouray de bonne foy que je l'ay imité dans quelques endroits, & que mesme je me suis servi de quelques vers de sa façon. J'ay crû que puisque nos meilleurs Autheurs se picquent d'emprunter les sentimens & les vers des Anciens qui nous ont devancés de plusieurs siecles, que nous pouvions aussi emprunter quelques chose de ceux qui ne sont plus & qui nous ont précédés de quelques années . . .

Boyer keeps practically the characters of *La Calprenède's* tragedy with only a slight change of names: Coban (Cobham)³⁰ takes the place of Cecil, and the Duchesse de Clarence fills the rôle of Lady Cecil. Salisbury, as in Thomas Corneille's play, takes the part of Southampton as Essex's friend. Coban is not merely an enemy of Essex; he also aspires to the hand of the queen. The Duchess of Clarence knows of his ambitious designs as he knows of her secret love for Essex, and the two match their weapons fiercely in striving for their ends. As in *La Calprenède's* tragedy, Essex's guilt is questionable; here again he tears up the letters to the Irish Tyrone calling them "faux écrits"; in the the trial scene of Act III he refuses to make any defense of his action; and even the queen's interruption in the midst of the council-meeting can bring forth no avowal from him, so that the monarch angrily demands the resumption of his trial. After Essex's condemnation, the Duchess of Clarence, anxious to save her lover, her "unique bien", reveals the ambitious projects of Coban to Elizabeth, who would be more than delighted to find a reason for saving Essex; her enemy Coban reciprocates by disclosing to the queen the love of Essex and Clarence. Elizabeth shows her jealousy quite like the monarch of Thomas Corneille, but Clarence pacifies her and moves her to a feeling of tenderness for her prisoner much as did the Duchesse d'Irton. Clarence finally arrives with the ring³¹ as

³⁰ Henry Brooke, eighth lord Cobham, was a brother-in-law and friend of Robert Cecil, therefore an enemy of Essex, who took part in Essex's trial. Camden mentions him along with Cecil and Raleigh as Essex's adversary.

³¹ Boyer says in his preface:

Je n'ay pas oublié la circonstance de la bague. Je veux croire que Monsieur Corneille le jeune a eu ses raisons pour le faire. Je la

a sign of Essex's humility and the queen immediately dispatches a messenger to stop the execution, but the wicked Coban, by issuing a contrary order, hastens his enemy's death. Coban's subsequent death cannot assuage Elizabeth's grief.

Boyer's play lacks careful construction and good taste; the reader immediately feels himself removed from the simple action of Thomas Corneille's tragedy with its one theme of love. In the conception of Coban as the ambitious enemy working for Essex's downfall, and in the outbreak of the populace against the earl's sentence, the play reminds one of Boursault's *Marie Stuart*; in fact all three of these seventeenth-century tragedies on Essex have a theme similar to the Mary Stuart-Norfolk-Elizabeth plays of the same period.

The Frères Parfaict call the *Comte d'Essex* Boyer's best play and express satisfaction in his having been obliged to prepare it quickly for the stage since the plays over which he worked longer, he marred by over-correction.³² The same critics consider Boyer's play far superior to La Calprenède's:

Elizabeth et le Comte d'Essex agissent avec plus de dignité, & sont plus interessans. Coban qui tient la place de Cecile de M. de la Calprenède, le surpasse en esprit, et en adresse; & la Duchesse de Clarence l'emporte fort sur Madame Cecile par sa veritable tendresse & la generosité de ses sentimens.³³

But surely the Elizabeth and Essex of La Calprenède showed no lack of dignity; on the contrary, Boyer's Coban acts more like the villain of a romantic tragi-comedy, a type like Boursault's Murray, whose ambition drives him to treachery. La Calprenède's tragedy, in my opinion, conforms much more closely to classical tradition than Boyer's, which borders on the tragi-comedy.

After Boyer's tragedy the Essex story encountered a long period of silence; no plays on that subject appeared during the

tiens historique, & d'ailleurs c'est une tradition si constante parmy les Anglois, que ceux de cette Nation qui ont vû le Comte d'Essex à l'Hostel de Bourgogne, ont eu quelque peine à le reconnoistre par le deffaut de cet incident.

³² *Histoire du Théâtre François*, vol. XII, p. 101: "Il auroit cherché à y mettre de l'esprit, des pointes, & des ornemens à sa façon qui n'auroient servi qu'à la gêner."

³³ *Op. cit.*, vol. XII, p. 110.

eighteenth century, and only in the nineteenth, with the beginnings of romantic tragedy did it recur. In 1829 Ancelot's³⁴ five-act tragedy, entitled *Elisabeth d'Angleterre*,³⁵ revived the story. As characteristic of the nineteenth-century theater, Ancelot's play possesses complicated intrigue, rich background, and local color, but lacks the fine psychological analysis of the seventeenth-century productions. The story itself more closely resembles those of the English tradition in presenting as Essex's mistress, not Lady Cecil, a Duchesse d'Irton, nor a Duchesse de Clarence, but the Countess (Duchesse) of Nottingham, first lady-in-waiting to Elizabeth.³⁶ The courtiers, Cecil and Raleigh, here reappear with the addition of the Earl of Nottingham, who takes the place of Southampton as Essex's friend, and of La Calprenède's Cecil in the rôle of betrayed husband. As in Aubéry du Maurier's *Mémoires*, it is the Earl (Duc) of Nottingham who keeps his wife from delivering the ring to the queen, and Cecil does not figure in this part of the tragedy.

In Act I, Essex, during his interview with Elizabeth, speaks no gallant word, indeed does not even manifest jealousy when

³⁴Ancelot (Jacques-Arsène-François-Polycarpe), born at Havre, 1794, died in Paris, 1854. He composed a tragedy, *Warbeck*, which was received by the Comédie Française but never performed. His masterpiece is the historical tragedy *Louis IX* (1819). In 1849 under the direction of M. de Tocqueville, minister of foreign affairs, he undertook a mission to Turin, Florence, Brussels, etc. for the mutual observance of copyrights.

³⁵ Played for the first time at the Théâtre Français, December 4, 1829; published by Bréauté, Paris, 1829.

³⁶ Cf. Richard Schiedermaier, *Graf von Essex in der Literatur*, Kaiserlautern, 1908; Walther Baerwolff, *Der Graf von Essex im deutschen Drama*, Stuttgart, 1920, who in their works have made a study of the English plays of Banks, Jones, and Brooke. In 1685 John Banks produced his *Unhappy Favorite or the Earl of Essex* in the Royal Theater; in 1748-9 Henry Brooke played his *Earl of Essex* in Dublin and in 1761 produced it in London in Drury Lane; in 1753 a third production, Henry Jones' *Earl of Essex*, appeared at Covent Garden. All these English tragedies follow the story of 1650, *History of the Most renowned Queen Elizabeth and her great Favourite, the Earl of Essex. In Two Parts. A Romance*, in which Essex is secretly married to the Countess of Rutland, and both the Countess of Nottingham and Queen Elizabeth are her rivals for his love. Banks makes the Countess of Nottingham, thirsting for vengeance, responsible for Essex's death by failing to deliver the ring.

she praises Sir Walter Raleigh, so that she fears he no longer loves her; in fact he may love some other woman:

Qui que tu sois, ô toi qui m'as ravi son cœur,
Prends garde! jouis bien d'un rapide bonheur,
La fille d'Henri huit, si longtemps outragée,
Peut se lasser enfin de n'être pas vengée. (Act I, scene VII)

In the second act we see the guilty love of the Countess of Nottingham and Essex. Since the sight of the ring which Elizabeth has given to her favorite saddens the countess, Essex presents it to her, while she in turn gives him a scarf she has embroidered for him. After Essex's departure, Nottingham returns from the night-session of Parliament to tell his wife of Essex's conviction. He speaks of his friendship for Essex and murmurs happily about his own domestic felicity. Is the scarf he has seen his wife embroidering for himself? Act III takes us back to the court with Raleigh's report of Essex's seizure, and his delivery to Elizabeth of the fatal scarf which Essex has tried desperately to keep at the time of his capture. When Nottingham arrives to make a last stand for his friend before the queen, she shows him the scarf which a rival of hers has given Essex; Elizabeth notes the nobleman's pallor but cannot guess his mental anguish. In the latter part of the tragedy the Countess of Nottingham, who tries to send the ring to the queen, is detained by her angry husband and arrives too late to save her lover. When Elizabeth learns the whole truth, she is stricken at the thought that perhaps Essex sought her aid in his last moments:

Sans doute en m'accusant le malheureux est mort!
Je ne survivrai point à cet affreux remord. (Act V, scene V)

She falls back weakly into an arm-chair and, when Cecil begs her to think of affairs of state, cries wearily,

A qui viens-tu parler de grandeur souveraine?
Regarde-moi, Cécil! . . . ai-je l'air d'une reine?
Tout est fini; va-t'en! je n'ai plus de sujets.
Que me font vos traités, vos guerres, vos projets? (*ibid.*)

Pointing to her empty throne,

Voilà mon trône! . . . ici que mon règne s'achève! ⁸⁷

⁸⁷ Though not expressly stated, this death-scene sounds like a repre-

Ancelot had, perhaps, read Voltaire's criticism of Thomas Corneille's *Comte d'Essex*, since he carefully shows Elizabeth signing the death-warrant. Like many of Dumas's and Hugo's tragedies and all melodramas, the plot advances by external means rather than by inner conflict: the embroidered scarf here plays as important a rôle as Ethelwood's toque or Rodolfo's mantle. The author in true nineteenth-century style makes several allusions to Shakespeare, representing him as Essex's familiar, and showing the Countess of Nottingham reading *Othello* while thinking of her husband whom she betrays.

That the Essex story proved popular is attested by the fact that a few years later, in 1838, it became the libretto for one of Donizetti's operas, *Roberto Devereux*, *Conte d'Essex*, with words by Salvador Cammarano, who closely follows Ancelot's tragedy.³⁸ In 1841 the same opera was given in French at Rouen, Etienne Monnier having translated the Italian words of Cammarano into French verse.

Variations of the Essex theme appear in two subsequent productions. A certain Edouard Marteau composed *Elisabeth, reine d'Angleterre et d'Irlande*, tragi-comédie en deux journées et trois parties, which makes not Essex but Sir Charles Blount the queen's favorite. The skit recounts one of Elizabeth's early love-affairs: Hélène, her lady-in-waiting, becomes publicly engaged to General Jean Norris, and Elizabeth, in token of her approval of the marriage, presents one of her bracelets. In Part II there appears in the park a masked lady whom Essex would follow but that Sir Charles Blount, who has become enamoured of a masked lady, prevents him. Norris picks up a bracelet dropped by the mysterious lady and recognizes it as the one given to Hélène by the queen. In Part III Elizabeth enters, naming Essex leader of the army in Holland, and in a confidential interview with Hélène bids her state that she has lost her bracelet. When Norris subsequently produces a bracelet similar to Hélène's and accuses her of having given a secret rendezvous to

sentation of Paul Delaroche's painting, *La Mort de la Reine Elisabeth* (1827).

³⁸ A note on the title-page of a French and Italian edition states: "Le sujet de ce drame est historique. Toutefois on doit ajouter que l'auteur a imité en partie la tragédie de M. Ancelot, *Elisabeth d'Angleterre*."

Sir Charles Blount, Elizabeth's lady-in-waiting begins to penetrate the queen's secret. The truth finally comes out—that Hélène and Sir Charles are very much in love—so the great queen yields and accords their marriage, though not without a feeling of regret that her own love has been spurned. The many disguises and misunderstandings, redeemed by no clear character-study or graceful dialog, ban the composition from the ranks of literature.

A one-act drama called *L'Anneau du Comte d'Essex*³⁹ by Ali Vial de Sabligny gives the story of an attempt to save Essex at his last hour. The actors are only four in number: Queen Elizabeth, Lord Giffurk, an old noble, Lady Wiffrid, a lady-in-waiting, and Lord Sommerson, Essex's deadly enemy. Lord Sommerson holds in his possession the ring which Essex has ordered him to convey to Queen Elizabeth, but Sommerson, thinking this an easy means of disposing of a troublesome rival, fails to deliver it; Lady Wiffrid therefore works to extract it from his clutches. By flattery and cajoling and by according him an interview at her house for the following day, she hands him her ring which shall serve as a *laissez-passer*, asking in return for the one he wears on his finger. Sommerson, reluctant to give the ring, decides to test whether she realizes its power and therefore refuses. Lady Wiffrid feigns she thinks his refusal arises from the fact that another mistress has presented it, and Sommerson, confident that she has no knowledge of its powers, gives her the ring. She hastens with her cherished treasure to the queen, who immediately sends Lord Giffurk to stop the execution, but at that moment the bell tolls in sign of Essex's death. Elizabeth condemns Sommerson by way of vengeance, but Lady Wiffrid, who feels responsible for Sommerson's denunciation, secures a commutation of his sentence to exile.

Where the author got his fanciful names, why he did not show some motivation for Lady Wiffrid's actions, or why he did not show the queen more feeling, remains a mystery. For a one-act play which above all should possess concentrated action, this production is singularly lacking in the requisite qualities.

We have no record of Marteau's or Ali Vial de Sabligny's

³⁹ Published in *Veillées du Poëte, Drames et Morceaux détachés*, Paris, Dentu, 1865.

compositions having been performed, but there did come another big nineteenth-century production of *Le Comte d'Essex* in Couturier's five-act drama, played for the first time at the Châtelet, May 4, 1868.⁴⁰ The action takes place at Essex House where the master's profusion and lavishness are the talk of the domestics.⁴¹ Essex and Southampton, after remarking on Sir Walter Raleigh's sudden rise to favor and Elizabeth's susceptibility to his adulation, confer on plans for Essex's conspiracy, by which he means to make Elizabeth abdicate in favor of James VI of Scotland so that he may regain his former power at court.⁴² Among another group of courtiers there is gossip of Essex's former love-affair with Sir Howard's wife. Howard, who has overheard the gossip, vows he will have vengeance on the man whom he has so long considered his good friend and has now discovered to be his betrayer, by revealing the plans of conspiracy to Essex's enemy, Raleigh. Further complications arise with the arrival of Queen Elizabeth who has been hunting in the neighborhood. Since the monarch apprehends Essex's love for young Catherine Sidney, she decides to engage Catherine to Raleigh. She is delighted to see Essex's apparent jealousy for Raleigh's hold on royal favor, and offers him a ring in token of reconciliation. But Essex, we now learn, is already secretly married to Catherine and continues his plans of conspiracy, telling his wife to feign consent to the engagement with Raleigh until he can get his plot under way. Catherine begs him to desist from his rash undertakings—she will flee with him. But Essex cannot so easily forget fame and power:

Il faut que je sente au-dessous de moi, tout ce qui s'agit, tout ce qui pense! (Act II, scene II)

Raleigh feels no less worried than Essex at the commanded

⁴⁰ Published by Dentu, Paris, 1868.

⁴¹ History paints Essex thus: cf. D. N. B. "His generosity to his friends is the best trait in his character, although beside it must be set his habitual extravagance."

⁴² The historical Essex feared Cecil's bringing the Spanish Infanta to the English throne as successor to Elizabeth, and therefore made negotiations with James VI of Scotland, though probably without any intention of forcing Elizabeth to abdicate.

engagement to Catherine since he has secretly married Elizabeth Throckmorton.⁴³

Howard now reveals Essex's conspiracy to Raleigh, who in turn passes the news to the queen along with the announcement of Essex's union with Catherine. At the engagement ceremony Elizabeth ascertains in the pallor of Essex and Catherine Sidney the truth of Raleigh's report, so with fiendish delight suggests that the wedding ceremony of Catherine and Raleigh be celebrated that very evening. Essex thereupon announces his marriage and breaks out against the queen, who angrily orders his arrest. Provocation to a duel between Essex and Raleigh, and an announcement that the house is surrounded by enemies brings Act III to an exciting close.

The scene now shifts from Essex House to the court. Although Raleigh, who has desired only Essex's downfall, would now cease hostilities, Howard, who is bent on vengeance for the offence done him, will not rest until he has brought Essex to the scaffold: *Je comprends vos scrupules, sir Raleigh; votre rôle est terminé, le mien commence.* (Act IV, scene III)

The group thus breaks into opposing factions, Raleigh, Lady Howard and Catherine Sidney working in vain to save Essex. In the trial when Francis Bacon rises with the other peers in the vote of condemnation because he hopes thereby to gain Elizabeth's favor, Essex bitterly calls him a Judas but makes no defense of himself and takes his sentence with the utmost calm. The queen, horribly disturbed at her favorite's conviction, dispatches Lady Howard to his prison to make him send back the ring.

The final act shows Essex's last hours in the Tower of London before his execution. Raleigh entreats him to escape by the Thames, but Essex refuses on the grounds of honor. Lady Howard who secures the ring is unfortunately confronted by her husband who has heard Elizabeth's command and followed his wife to the prison. Seizing the ring from her and holding it up so that Essex may see, he cries that he has vengeance for July 10, 1597. Essex murmurs, "*Dieu est juste*", and mounts the

⁴³ In 1592 Raleigh was committed to the Tower by the enraged queen for his intrigue with Elizabeth Throckmorton, but released a few months later.

scaffold. Catherine, meanwhile, who has taken poison and is at the point of death when the queen arrives, murmurs that Elizabeth has not kept her promise regarding the ring. The monarch demands an explanation from Howard, who tries to vindicate his action, whereat she expostulates:

Il t'avait pris ton honneur, dis-tu? il avait séduit ta femme! . . . La belle affaire! . . . il m'avait bien trompée, moi! . . . et je lui avais pardonné! (Act V, scene XI)

She accuses Howard of having killed Beauty, Youth, Intelligence, and Force, leaving her a lonely, forsaken woman.

The dramatist makes Elizabeth a rather entertaining though not particularly historical character. Essex at the opening of the play thus describes her:

Cette vierge de l'occident, comme elle se fait audacieusement appeler, songe à s'émanciper, elle veut plaire, être aimée pour elle-même . . . platoniquement, il est vrai, mais sans partage; elle exige de ses favoris une chasteté, une fidélité absolue, en échange de sa faveur! . . . n'est-ce pas de la démente. (Act I, scene VI)

Raleigh, commenting on the recent reconciliation of Elizabeth and Essex, gives a concise character portrayal of both:

Le comte est emporté et orgueilleux, la reine despote et violente, je doute que la bonne harmonie reste longtemps dans le ménage. (Act II, scene IX)

To herself, Elizabeth (represented in this drama as a woman of forty-five) confides dejectedly:

Tu l'aimes? mais regarde-toi donc, insensée! quelle folie est la tienne! le temps n'a-t-il pas ridé ton visage? Tes favoris te subissent mais ne sauraient t'aimer. Ce qu'ils aiment, c'est la beauté, c'est la jeunesse et tu es vieille et laide. (Act IV, scene XI)

The author, in his effort to create local color and atmosphere, makes many references to Shakespeare, and even introduces him as a character at the festival Essex has prepared, where he shall play his new tragedy, *Hamlet*. Elizabeth graciously receives him:⁴⁴

⁴⁴ This picture of Elizabeth as a patron of letters cannot be considered authentic. Jessopp in his article on Elizabeth in the *D. N. B.* states: "For literature as we now understand the term, it is curious that she never appears to have had any taste. Some of Shakespeare's plays were

Mon règne est fécond en grands capitaines, en navigateurs, et en philosophes. La place est vacante pour un Eschyle ou un Euripide, si notre protection suffit pour le faire éclore, elle vous est acquise. (Act II, scene XII)

Later, during Essex's trial, he disguises himself as a "greffier" in order to attend the proceedings and follow the fate of his patron.

Sir Walter Raleigh is represented as the typical courtier who makes flattering speeches and performs gallant deeds; the episode of the cloak, of course, plays its part in making a *coup de théâtre*: the queen, in passing from the castle to a pavillion, must cross a puddle; Essex orders the hole filled with sand, but Raleigh gallantly lays down his mantle, makes an extravagant speech, and the curtain falls on Act I. Although a rival of Essex for his favor with the queen, Raleigh is moved by no vicious feelings and has no desire to see his opponent brought to the block. It is Lord Howard who directs all the sinister aspects of the tragedy.

Couturier's drama completes the list of Essex plays in French literature. In them all, the romantic character of the episode has been stressed: the story of the rival and the ring receives much attention, Essex's guilt is condoned, and Elizabeth's grief at his execution considered a forecast of her imminent death. Unfortunately, the cold historical facts do not substantiate the glowing romance; Elizabeth did not express regret for having sentenced Essex, she evidently did not feel that the rash young noble had received an unjust punishment, and according to historical accounts she was never gayer than in the year 1601.

But in 1602 her health began to fail; early in 1603 she caught a bad cold, became alarmingly ill, and passed away quietly March 24th of that year. To the last, Elizabeth refused to recognize an heir; the historian Innes⁴⁵ thus describes the various claimants to the throne:

In point of priority by heredity King James of Scotland unquestionably stood first of the descendants of Henry VII and Elizabeth of York; yet

performed in her presence, but she looked upon such matters as pastime—one show was as good as another."

⁴⁵ Arthur D. Innes, *England under the Tudors*, vol. IV, of *A History of England* in 6 vols. General editor: C. W. C. Oman, London, Methuen, 1905, p. 399.

the fact that he was not only an alien but King of Scotland made him in himself an unwelcome candidate. Next to him, since like him she descended from Margaret Tudor, stood his cousin Arabella—a Stewart too, but of the Lennox Stewarts, not the Royal House: an English subject; but with the drawback that she was a woman and unmarried. Third, but first under the will of Henry VIII was Lord Beauchamp, son of Katharine Grey and the Earl of Hertford; about the validity of his parents' marriage, however, there was a doubt.

The dramatists, Nus and Brot, authors of *Jane Grey* already discussed, found in this situation material for a drama called *Le Testament de la Reine Elisabeth*, drame historique à grand spectacle en cinq actes et huit tableaux, played for the first time at the Gaîté, May 14, 1867.⁴⁶ The play is a lurid melodrama, showing the struggle of different factions for the inheritance. Even before Elizabeth's death, James VI comes to England, disguised as a cattle-herd, spying on his rivals and hoping to win the crown by his astute manoeuvres.⁴⁷ The authors bring in the Guy Fawkes Gunpowder Plot⁴⁸ and many other sensational events which do not concern us, but their picture of the sick and aged queen, who, surrounded by her enemies, tries to keep up appearances to the very last moment of her existence, offers an interesting subject of study: to the disguised James she speaks of himself:

On dit qu'il ne m'aime guère, votre roi, et qu'il convoite ouvertement mon héritage. (Ier Tableau, scene XI)

To Arabella Stuart's sympathetic advances she coldly replies:

Je n'ai pas de parents, je n'ai que des ennemis qui désirent ma mort et convoient mes dépouilles. (*ibid.*)

In her death-scene, which according to stage directions is to be a representation of Paul Delaroche's painting, she murmurs:

Ah ces têtes coupées qui me regardent . . . Comte d'Essex, tu me trahissais . . . Marie Stuart, on t'aimait trop. (3^e Tableau, scene II)

When told to name her successor, she calls Seymour⁴⁹ "un jeune

⁴⁶ Published in Paris, Librairie Dramatique, 1867.

⁴⁷ According to history, James did not leave Edinburgh until April 5th, two weeks after Elizabeth's death.

⁴⁸ This plot did not occur until 1605.

⁴⁹ Lord Beauchamp's son.

fou," Arabella "une âme sans énergie," and James "le fils de Marie Stuart, jamais!" Her minister obliges her to sign in favor of James Stuart, and her last words express her bitterness:

Je vais mourir, abandonnée de tous, à la merci de mes ennemis . . .
Ah! j'ai voulu vivre seule, j'ai haï tout le monde, je n'ai aimé que moi
. . . je suis punie, je suis punie. (4^e Tableau, scene IV)

The note of justice and retribution, found in all melodramas, prevails in this death-scene.

Fortunately, Elizabeth's passing possessed nothing of the theatrical; but she left, says Camden "a great miss of herself." Historians agree in pointing to the Age of Queen Elizabeth as a time when men lived life abundantly, when the present was full of hope, when the "joie de vivre" everywhere was manifest. "Then alas! Gloriana died," says Walter Besant,⁵⁰ "and the world of poetry sank back into prose."

⁵⁰ Walter Besant, *London in the Time of the Tudors*, London, Black, 1904.

CHAPTER VIII

THE FATE OF THE TUDORS

From the foregoing study of the plays themselves one can readily perceive how freely French dramatists have dealt with the Tudors and what liberties they have taken with the historical facts in order to create dramatic situations. In fact, Dumas's definition of his *Catherine Howard* as the extra-historical play in which history serves merely as the hook on which he hangs his picture applies to many of the dramas on the Tudor monarchs. From his account of the genesis of that play with the metamorphosis of *Edith aux longs cheveux* into *Catherine Howard* we can infer what happened in other cases. Hugo's *Marie Tudor*, all the French adaptations of Scott's *Kenilworth* (which itself belongs in Dumas's category), *vaudevilles* on Elizabeth's youth, or melodramas on the reign of Henry VIII all fall into the same extra-historical group.

Other plays, though based on an historical situation, receive an influx of romantic episodes or anecdotes to enliven the plot. Thus we find the story of Northumberland's climb to power frequently enhanced by the account of his poisoning young Edward VI; many playwrights show Elizabeth in love with Norfolk and jealous of his unfailing devotion to the Queen of Scots; the romance of Elizabeth and Essex is usually related with the fantastic additions of the rival and the ring; all dramatists introduce a rival, and only Thomas Corneille omits the ring story; the anecdote of the gallant Raleigh and his cloak likewise makes its way into the dramas.

The introduction of such extraneous incidents or the development of an unhistoric episode sometimes leads to actual distortion of the Dynasts' characters. Henry VII, to be sure, appears so little in French drama that he cannot suffer gravely in this respect, but Henry VIII has rarely received a complete portrait. Authors select one or two characteristic traits and dwell on them to the exclusion of other lineaments. For this reason Henry VIII has become a symbol for the Tyrant; not only in Chénier's tragedy where he stands manifestly as the typical despot, but in

a large group of plays regarding the Tudors we find allusions to his imperious manner. In *Les Trois Catherine* (Act I, scene X) he concedes that "la voix du peuple est celle de Dieu," then adds that one must respect it when it is in accord with his own plans. In the same drama (Act I, scene XIII) he bids the council act carefully:

Vous en serez responsable devant Dieu. . . (avec expression) et devant moi ! !

The same autocratic nature shows in Dupetit Méré's *Anne de Boulen*:

Habitué à voir tout plier sous le poids de son autorité, Henri est le plus impérieux des hommes. (Act I, scene IV)

Henry himself remarks in a later scene:

Ignorez-vous donc que rien ne peut résister à ma volonté, que les lois même se taisent quand je commande. (Act I, scene XI)

Not only Henry's despotic nature but his furious temper appear in many plays. In *Les Trois Catherine*, at the moment of his death, he angrily plots the destruction of Catherine Parr, Seymour, and all others whom he considers his enemies, then dies in a paroxysm of rage caused by his own fury. Henry's temper has become proverbial with French dramatists who in portraying the characters of his descendants paint them as "filles d'Henri VIII" to designate their vehemence. Thus Mary Tudor in her moments of fierceness and cruelty is called true daughter of Henry VIII and Elizabeth, whenever she evinces particular propensities for wrath and vengeance, receives the same epithet. In Ancelot's *Elisabeth d'Angleterre* (Act V, scene II) she cries to the absent Essex:

Je n'écouterai plus, ingrat, que ma colère,
Et je me souviendrai qu'Henri huit est mon père.

Imperious, violent, inconstant. The last adjective applies also to the character of Henry VIII painted in French drama. In Victor Hugo's *Marie Tudor* (Iere Journée, scene II) the turnkey of the Tower describes him to Gilbert:

Un homme singulier que ce roi Henri VIII ! Un homme qui changeait de femmes comme une femme change de robes. Il répudia la première, il fit couper la tête à la seconde, il fit ouvrir le ventre à la troisième ; quant à la quatrième, il lui fit grâce, il la chassa ; mais en revanche il

fit couper la tête à la cinquième. Ce n'est pas le conte de Barbe-Bleue que je vous fais, c'est l'histoire d'Henri VIII.

Again in *Les Trois Catherine* (Act I, scene VI) Catherine Parr warns Catherine Howard of the king's inconstancy:

Ah! Madame . . . méfiez-vous des brusques retours de ce cœur inconstant . . . ses premières épouses se flattaient aussi de l'avoir fixé pour la vie.

Most authors content themselves with portraying one or another of these three characteristics of Henry VIII, though sometimes one encounters a different conception: the authors of *Lord Surrey* show him (quite unhistorically) at the complete mercy of the villain Clinton, who holds complete sway in the kingdom; Duport and Monnais picture him in one instance bowing to the superior power of his Italian music-master, Baltazarini, who remarks contentedly:

Je n'ai connu que deux hommes sincères, Michel-Ange et moi, et encore j'ai l'avantage . . . Michel-Ange se contentit de résister à Jules II, et moi je me fais obéir par Hénri VIII. Voilà ce que c'est que le pouvoir des arts . . . les arts d'abord et ensuite les couronnes. (*Les Trois Catherine*, Act I, scene V)

Plays like the violent *Toute Faute s'expie* of Jean Rouxel, in which Henry VIII appears as a licentious brute, show that in some cases Henry's character has been actually distorted. Only rarely do we find a more complete estimate of his character. Auguste Adam in his *Darnley* (1873) at least gives a more general portrait of the ruler:

Beaucoup de sang innocent a coulé sous son règne; mais il a châtié bien des traîtres; il a légué à sa fille un trône inébranlable, un peuple uni dans une même foi et dans un même amour, et il a eu pour lui le parlement d'Angleterre. (Act I, scene III)

But as a rule Henry VIII's portrait remains incomplete.

Edward VI, like his grandfather Henry VII, has not generally received the notice of dramatists. In only one play, the *Jane Grey* of Nus and Brot, does he figure, and here his rôle goes far beyond the bounds of history. His effeminate nature, his nervous disease, and his violent death at the hands of Arundel all form a fanciful picture not corroborated by historians.

Probably more than any other member of the dynasty, Mary

Tudor has suffered the unfair treatment of historians and consequently of dramatists. In the seventeenth century La Calprenède in his *Leanne reine d'Angleterre* showed her over-clement. As a reaction, perhaps, against Catholic sympathy, Madame de Staël and Leblanc painted her cruel and vindictive while Victor Hugo accused her of leading the life of a shameless courtesan, and Soumet, followed by Nus and Brot, showed her infatuated with young Guilford and putting Jane Grey to death merely through jealous spite.

Only slightly less cruel than Mary appears her sister Elizabeth, whom most authors show guilty of shedding the innocent blood of her cousin Mary Stuart. With the exception of Tronchin's and Montchrestien's plays, French dramas on this subject make the Tudor queen too unfeeling in her treatment of Mary; and some of the *tendenzdramen* go so far as to make her a hypocritical monster who conceals her delight in bloodshed behind a mask of perfidious piety. The violent character of Elizabeth portrayed by so many French dramatists flashes forth in her apostrophe to the Queen of Scots in the *Marie Stuart* (Act V, scene I) of C. F. Martin:

Du grand art de régner tu n'en es qu'aux essais.
 Va, descends chez les morts conter ce que tu sais.
 Instruis Anne Boleyn que sa fille éhontée
 N'a pas dégénéré du flanc qui l'a portée;
 Déplore-lui ton front de mon foudre encore chaud;
 Mais si tu vois mon père, apprends-lui que là-haut
 Les réformes déjà par lui-même entreprises
 S'accompliront par moi malgré Rome et les Guises.

In the same play her favorite Leicester speaks in no enthusiastic terms of his duties as courtier:

Attentif à flatter une vieille jalouse
 Qui me leurra vingt ans du rang de mon épouse.
 (Act III, scene I)

We have seen that in all three episodes which dramatists have treated—the Kenilworth story, the Mary Stuart-Norfolk theme, and the Essex romance—Elizabeth manifests violent jealousy. While jealousy was a very present trait in the character of the historical Elizabeth, and while we know that she never forgave Leicester, Essex, or Robert Carey for marrying on the sly,

dramatists are too prone to represent that trait to the exclusion of others no less pronounced.

We have seen that the sovereigns themselves have undergone modification at the hands of French playwrights; the nobles also frequently drop their historical rôles to play more important or more complicated parts. The Duke of Norfolk assumes additional duties in becoming the lover of Elizabeth; Leicester, we know from history, was in the Netherlands at the time of Mary Stuart's execution, yet many eighteenth and nineteenth-century dramatists make him play an important part in her destruction. The story of the Kenilworth episode and Leicester's responsibility for his wife's demise we know to be pure fiction. In the case of Essex, dramatists have shown unusual lenience, reducing his guilt to a negligible quantity and showing him the unfortunate victim of a court intrigue. Names of nobles have not always been carefully respected, as we noted in the case of La Calprenède and Thomas Corneille who apply the wrong name to the wrong historical character. One encounters often fantastic spelling: thus, Jane Grey's Tilney is changed to Tilray, Abergavenny becomes Albergenny, and Tweed, Tweld. In Regnault's *Marie Stuart* "l'illustre de Celon" evidently stands for George Seton.

Why have French dramatists thus distorted the Tudors? Sometimes perhaps simply from carelessness or ignorance; sometimes also for deeper reasons. The picture of Henry VIII drawn by Marie-Joseph Chénier which represents the Tyrant, undeniably had its moral purpose, as the comments on divorce found in the *Lambert Simnel ou le Mannequin politique* of Picard and Empis or the *Jane Gray* of Alexandre Soumet and the remarks on government found in *Le Pâtissier Usurpateur* had a political purpose. For similar reasons the political writer Mirinny has given us his *Arafa* the meaning of which word he discloses in the sub-title: *L'Amour d'une Reine ou l'Abîme franco-anglais*.¹ Mirinny, deeply interested in foreign relations, explains in the preface of this drama his motives for giving such a work to the public:

Les Germains ont beaucoup de qualités, mais ils méprisent et asservissent progressivement toutes les autres races de l'Humanité. Il est donc

¹ Drame en 5 actes, en vers, par L. Mirinny, Paris, Imprimerie Typographique E. Eybord, imprimé aux frais de l'auteur.

indispensable que ces races s'entendent et s'unissent contre ce commun et formidable ennemi. *Arafa* a précisément pour but spécial de faire ressortir les dangers, à ce point de vue, des conflits avec l'Angleterre; il suffit ici de mentionner ce péril.

L. Mirinny, auteur de la *Pantosynthèse*
le 28 janvier 1900.

The play describes Elizabeth's affair with François, duc d'Anjou, making Leicester jealous of such an alliance and responsible for the failure of the venture. One need scarcely add that judged from the point of view of literary merit, the play sinks into the darkest obscurity.

Philosophical ideas, too, find reflection in the dramas on the Tudors. The theories of the eighteenth-century primitivists with their cry of "Back to Nature!" and their insistence on freedom from all the trammeling conventions of society probably influenced Comte Guibert's play on Anne Boleyn which is the only drama on the subject of Anne's downfall to show her guilty.² The Thomas More theme as well as that of the Queen of Scots has become a subject for religious propaganda.

It would be rather difficult to state in just what measure circumstances influenced the subjects treated by the dramatists of different centuries. It seems more or less significant, however, that no seventeenth-century author depicted the last hours of Anne Boleyn. The seventeenth century could not withstand the influence of the Catholic historians who had pictured Anne as a wicked woman undeserving of any pity. Not until the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, therefore, did dramatists treat the subject of her execution. The same Catholic influence perhaps led La Calprenède to depict Mary Tudor as a benignant sovereign in his *Ieanne reyne d'Angleterre*, while he made her younger sister Elizabeth harsh and unfeeling. In

² See Gilbert Chinard's "Quelques Origines littéraires de *René*", *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, vol. XLIII, no. 1, March, 1928, for a discussion of literary works on the subject of incest in the late eighteenth century. M. Servais Etienne, in *Le Genre Romanesque en France depuis la 'Nouvelle Héloïse' jusqu'aux approches de la Révolution*, Paris, Colin, 1922, p. 308, gives a list of novels which have incest as their theme. Comte Guibert could have been familiar with many of these works, and if not the works themselves, the general tendencies of the period influenced his portrayal of Anne Boleyn and her brother George.

a later period, on the other hand, when anti-clerical feeling ran high, Madame de Staël and her successors made Mary cruel and vindictive. Victor Hugo pictures her as indifferent to the hardships of her subjects and unable to appreciate the noble qualities of the workman Gilbert. In the character of that hero the dramatist introduces some of his favorite beliefs on the subject of democracy and we hear an echo of the debates on social principles which resounded throughout the nineteenth century.

With the question of background and atmosphere the seventeenth century felt only slightly preoccupied. The local color found in the classical tragedies on the subject of the Tudors, as we have seen, remains at most the kind found in Racine's *Bajazet*, internal rather than external, found in the characterization rather than in the stage-settings, the costumes, or the allusions to historical events. But with the melodrama and romantic drama of the nineteenth century, local color of the external variety becomes much more pronounced. The love of pageantry and brilliant display seized the authors of this period, who mounted their dramas "avec tout l'éclat possible" as the modern cinema directors enchant the eyes of the masses today with gorgeous spectacles. Beyond the costumes and settings, however, nineteenth-century dramatists often felt the need of introducing a more essential atmosphere, which they obtained by creating a rich background of secondary characters of historical name. Victor Hugo in his *Marie Tudor*, Ancelot in his *Elisabeth d'Angleterre*, Fontan in his *Perkins Warbec* made quite successful achievements in this way.

A character whom all the nineteenth-century French dramatists knew and consequently used for background in their plays on the Tudor period was William Shakespeare. Sometimes his works alone are mentioned: Ancelot's Countess of Nottingham reads *Othello* and Soumet's Jane Grey refers to *Macbeth*; sometimes the poet's own lines are used: Vernet's Amy Robsart takes Ophelia's words in her madscene. In his *Amy Robsart* Victor Hugo represents Shakespeare as the author of a masquerade performed at Kenilworth Castle during the entertainment offered by Leicester in 1575. At this date the English playwright was only eleven years old. In the same play Hugo represents Elizabeth quoting (in French translation, of course), the famous lines from *Macbeth* (Act I, scene VII):

I have no spur
To prick the sides of my intent, but only
Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself,
And falls on the other.

Couturier in his *Comte d'Essex* showed the dramatist's *Hamlet* produced at Essex House with Queen Elizabeth acting as a patroness of the arts. In *Le Songe d'une nuit d'été* (1850) by Leuven and Rosier we saw Elizabeth encouraging Shakespeare in his literary pursuits. We have already shown that Elizabeth did not patronize literature and that Essex protected the poet Spenser rather than Shakespeare. We must conclude, therefore, that the French playwrights have veritably forced him into their dramas, committing anachronisms and exaggerations in order to introduce him.

Another character brought into plays on the Tudors, into melodramas especially, is the magician-physician Cornelius Agrippa, known in history as Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim (1486-1535) who received a pension from François Ier, became physician to his mother, Louise de Savoie, and later was appointed historiographer to Charles Quint. Nus and Brot introduce him into their *Jane Grey* as the physician who by administering a potion miraculously cures Edward VI of his neurasthenia. Fillion and Jousserandot in their *Lord Surrey* make him a very human kind of person explaining to Surrey that he is a sorcerer only to wicked men like the villainous Clinton whom he would frighten by his prophecies. We have an opportunity in a subsequent scene to observe his method of foretelling the future: having paid careful attention to Clinton's account of the past dissension between Surrey and himself the "wizard" needs no occult powers to predict what will happen.

Quite naturally one finds in these French plays on the Tudors an expression of the characters' feelings for France. The Anne Boleyn of Chénier's *Henry VIII* cries before her death:

Oh, qui me les rendra, ces jours de mon enfance!
Roi, peuple fortuné, doux climat de la France.
Pour ce sanglant rivage, où j'ai reçu le jour,
Devais-je abandonner ton aimable séjour! (Act IV, scene I)

Madame de Staël's Jane Grey and Guilford, as also Soumet's young couple, hope to escape persecution by flight to France. Montchrestien showed Mary Queen of Scots endeavoring to

escape from Scotland to reach the shores of France; only because of a storm has she come to the shores of "les barbares Anglois"; many plays tell of her dying wish to be buried on French soil.

In the detailed study of the plays we have dwelt on the rôle of painting in its relation to French dramas on the Tudors; we have seen, also, the rôle of foreign literatures in these dramas. It remains now to make some estimate on the literary value of the productions. A reading of the plays cannot fail to convince one of their general mediocrity. Most of the authors are men whose names have quite justifiably sunk into oblivion. Who today remembers Regnault, Drap-Arnaud, La Place, Nus, Vernet, Couturier, or Carénou? And even when we meet names well-known in literature like those of Madame de Staël, Scribe, Victor Hugo, or Dumas père, we find that their works on the Tudors are not those which have made their names famous. Posterity has remembered Madame de Staël for other compositions than her *Jane Gray*; Scribe's talent is seen to better advantage in his *Bataille de Dames* or his *Verre d'Eau* than in his *Leicester, ou le Château de Kenilworth*; Victor Hugo's reputation as a dramatist, if he can claim any at all, derives from his *Hernani*, *Ruy Blas*, and *Marion de Lorme* rather than from his *Amy Robsart* or *Marie Tudor*, and Dumas père's *Henry III et sa Cour* and *Charles VII, chez ses grands Vassaux* more clearly display his talent in the historical drama than a play like *Catherine Howard*. It is with the Essex theme that French dramatists have had greater success. La Calprenède's *Comte d'Essex* stands out as his best dramatic work, and Thomas Corneille's tragedy of the same title remains, along with his *Ariane*, his best composition; the fact that it was famous for at least a century testifies its popularity.

At the outset of this study we set the problem of discovering to what extent French dramatists have evoked the Tudor period and given a picture of sixteenth-century England. Now, after reviewing the plays, we can conclude that French authors, interested as they were in the Tudors, have often used the dynasts as symbols of Tyranny, Cruelty, and Jealousy, and that they give only partial portraits of the monarchs themselves, without painting any very complete picture of England under their dominion.

APPENDIX

LIST OF PLAYS ON THE TUDORS

HENRY VII

- Richard III*, tragédie en 5 actes et en vers par Mme Lem . . . (Lemaignien), Paris, A. Egron; Barba, 1818.
- Lambert Simnel ou le Mannequin politique*, comédie en cinq actes et en prose par MM. Picard et Empis, représentée pour la première fois au Théâtre Français le 24 mars 1827.
- Perkins Warbec ou le Commis marchand*, vaudeville historique en deux actes par MM. Théaulon, Brazier et Carmouche représenté pour la première fois à Paris sur le Théâtre de Madame le 15 mai 1827.
- Perkins Warbec*, drame historique en 5 actes et en vers par L. M. Fontan représenté sur le Théâtre Royal de l'Odéon par les comédiens ordinaires du roi le 6 mai 1828. Paris, J. N. Barba, 1828.
- Le Pâtissier Usurpateur*, pièce historique en cinq petits actes par MM. Simonnin, Benjamin et Théodore N. (Nézel) représentée pour la première fois à Paris, sur le Théâtre de la Gaîté, le 4 décembre 1830. Paris chez P. J. Hardy, 1831.
- Marguerite d'Yorck*, mélodrame historique en 3 actes, précédé d'un Prologue, représenté pour la première fois sur le Théâtre de la Gaîté, le 23 mai 1839, par MM. Narcisse Fournier & Olivier Dessarsin; publié dans le *Magasin Théâtral*, Paris, Marchant, éditeur.

HENRY VIII

- Thomas Morus ou le Triomphe de la Foy & de la Constance* tragédie en prose. Dediée à Madame la Duchesse d'Esguillon, par Monsieur de la Serre. A Paris chez Augustin Courbé, 1642.
- Henry VIII*, tragédie en 5 actes par Marie-Joseph Chénier, député à la Convention Nationale; représentée pour la première fois à Paris, sur le Théâtre de la République, le 27 avril 1791. Paris, Moutard, 1793.
- Anne de Boulen*, mélodrame en 3 actes, par MM. Frédéric et * * *, musique de Adrian, ballet de M. Maximien. Représenté pour la première fois à Paris sur le Théâtre de l'Ambigu-Comique le mardi 8 mai 1821. Paris, chez Quoy, 1821.
- Anne de Bouleyn*, tragédie de Guibert (comte de) membre de l'Académie Française. Œuvres dramatiques publiées par sa veuve, Paris, Persan & Cie., 1822.
- Thomas Morus ou le Divorce d'Henri VIII*, tragédie en 5 actes représentée pour la première fois, sur le Théâtre Royal de l'Odéon le 9 décembre 1826, par M. X. V. Drap-Arnaud, Paris, Martinet, 1827.

- Les Trois Catherine*, scènes historiques du règne de Henri VIII en trois époques; paroles de MM. Duport et Ed. Monnaïs, musique de MM. Adolphe Adam et Casimir Gide; représentées, pour la première fois, sur le Théâtre des Nouveautés le 18 novembre 1830. Paris, J. N. Barba, 1830.
- Catherine Howard*, drame en 5 actes et 8 tableaux, par Alexandre Dumas, représenté pour la première fois au Théâtre de la Porte-Saint-Martin, le 2 juin 1834.
- Anne de Boulen*, opéra en 3 actes, paroles de Castil-Blaze d'après le drame italien de Romani, musique de Donizetti. Paris, Aulagnier, 1835.
- Lord Surrey*, drame en 5 actes par MM. Eugène Fillion et L. Jousserandot, représenté pour la première fois à Paris, sur le Théâtre de la Gaîté, le 17 mai, 1838. Théâtre Moderne.
- Deux Reines*, comédie-drame en 3 actes et 7 tableaux par Eugénie Casanova, Paris, 1867.
- Toute Faute s'expie*, drame en 5 actes et en six tableaux, en vers, par Jean Rouxel, Paris, Vanier, 1908.
- Marguerite Morus*, drame en 3 actes avec musique par Jacques d'Ars, Paris, 1912.
- Thomas Morus*, drame historique en 3 actes par Jacques d'Ars, Paris, s. d.

MARY TUDOR

- Jeanne reyne d'Angleterre*, tragédie de M. de La Calprenède. A Paris, chez Antoine de Sommaville, 1638.
- Jeanne Gray*, tragédie par M. de La Place, lue et reçue à la Comédie Française, le 1 mars 1777. Paris, chez Barrois l'aîné, 1781.
- Jane Gray*, tragédie en 5 actes et en vers par Mme de Staël, composée en 1787 et imprimée en 1790.
- Marie Tudor*, drame en 3 journées de Victor Hugo, représenté pour la première fois sur le Théâtre de la Porte-Saint-Martin, le 6 novembre 1833.
- Jane Gray*, drame en trois actes et cinq tableaux de M. Leblanc, mise en scène de M. Dupuis, décors de M. Rascalon, musique de M. François Bellon; précédé du *6 juillet 1553*, prologue en un acte; représenté pour la première fois à Paris sur le Théâtre dirigé par M. Dorsay (ci-devant Saqui). Paris, Gallet, 1834.
- Jane Grey*, tragédie en 5 actes et en vers par M. Alexandre Soumet et Madame Gabrielle Daltenheim représentée pour la première fois à Paris, sur le second Théâtre Français (l'Odéon) le 30 mars 1844. Magasin Théâtral, vol. 37, Paris, Marchant, 1844.
- Jane Gray*, drame historique en 5 actes et 8 tableaux par Aristide Caré nou, Montauban, 1850.
- Jane Grey*, drame historique en 5 actes par MM. Eugène Nus et Alphonse Brot, représenté pour la première fois à Paris sur le Théâtre de l'Ambigu-Comique, le 6 novembre, 1856, musique nouvelle de M. Amédée Artus.

La Vivante Image, drame en 4 actes et 5 tableaux d'après l'anglais *The Tangled Skein* (E. Orczy) par Jean-Joseph Renaud représenté pour la première fois au Théâtre Sarah Bernhardt, le 27 octobre, 1913.

ELIZABETH

L'Écossaise Tragédie d'Anthoine de Montchrestien. A Rouen chez Jean Petit, 1601; à Rouen chez Jean Osmont, 1604; à Nyort, chez Jacques Vaultier, 1606; à Rouen, chez Pierre de la Motte, 1627.

Marie Stuart, reine d'Écosse, tragédie de M. Regnault. A Paris chez Toussaint Quinet, 1639.

Le Comte d'Essex, tragédie de M. de La Calprenède. A Paris, 1639.

Le Comte d'Essex, tragédie de Thomas Corneille. A Paris, 1678.

Le Comte d'Essex, tragédie par M. Boyer de l'Académie Française. A Paris, chez Charles Osmont, 1678.

Marie Stuart, reine d'Écosse, tragédie qui sera représentée au Collège d'Harcourt pour la distribution des prix. A Paris chez Jean de Laulne, 1689.

Marie Stuart, tragédie en 3 actes en vers avec des intermèdes en musique. (anonyme) 1690.

Marie Stuard, reine d'Écosse, tragédie par Monsieur Boursault, à Paris chez Jean Guignard, 1691 (Played in 1683).

Marie Stuart, reine d'Écosse (tragédie par F. Tronchin de Genève), Paris, Prault, 1735.

Marie Stuart, tragédie de P. A. Lebrun, représentée pour la première fois sur le Théâtre Français le 6 mars, 1820.

Marie Stuard, Reine d'Écosse par Doigny du Ponceau. A Paris, chez Boucher, 1820.

Marie Stuart, tragédie en 5 actes par J. V., Paris, 1820.

Marie Stuart, drame en 3 actes et en prose, imité de la tragédie allemande de Schiller par MM. Merle et Rougemont; représenté pour la première fois à Paris sur le Théâtre de la Porte-Saint-Martin le 8 août 1820. Paris, Barba, 1820.

Le Château de Kenilworth, mélodrame en 3 actes à grand spectacle, tiré du roman de sir Walter Scott par MM. Boirie et H. Lemaire. Musique de M. Alexandre. Ballet de M. Blache. Décors de M. Cicéri. Représenté pour la première fois à Paris sur le Théâtre de la Porte-Saint-Martin, le 23 mars 1822. Paris, chez Palet, 1822.

Leicester, ou le Château de Kenilworth, opéra comique en 3 actes par Scribe et Mélesville, représenté pour la première fois le 25 janvier 1823.

Amy Robsart drame de Victor Hugo, représenté (sous le nom de Paul Foucher) sur le Théâtre Royal de l'Odéon, le 13 février, 1828.

La Jeunesse de Marie Stuart, drame en 2 parties mêlé de chant par MM. F. de Villeneuve et E. Vander-Burch, représenté pour la première fois sur le Théâtre de Madame, le 27 juin, 1829. Paris, Riga, 1829.

Marie Stuart, tragédie en un acte (4 soirée de Neuchatel 5 novembre, 1829) par Eugène de Pradel.

- Elisabeth d'Angleterre*, tragédie en 5 actes par M. Ancelot représentée pour la première fois sur le Théâtre Français le 4 décembre 1829. Paris, Bréauté, 1829.
- Le Retour de Marie Stuart en Ecosse*, drame en 5 actes. Histoires dramatiques par la Baronne d'Ordre. Paris, Dentu, 1839.
- Dinah l'Egyptienne* drame en 3 actes mêlés de chants par MM. Saint Yves et Louis Lefebvre, représenté pour la première fois à Paris sur le Théâtre de la Porte-Saint-Antoine le 18 avril 1840.
- La Comtesse de Leicester*, drame en 4 actes par M. Alphonse Vernet, représenté pour la première fois à Paris sur le Théâtre du Luxembourg le 7 octobre 1840.
- Marie Stuart*, tragédie en 5 actes et en vers par C. F. Martin, Paris, 1841.
- Robert d'Evreux, Comte d'Essex*, grand opéra en 3 actes, musique de Donizetti, paroles imitées de l'italien et arrangées pour la scène française par Etienne Monnier, représenté pour la première fois, au Théâtre des Arts de Rouen en février 1841. Paris, 1841.
- Marie Stuart*, opéra en 5 actes, paroles de Théodore Anne, musique de Niedermeyer, exécuté pour la première fois à Paris, sur le Théâtre de l'Académie royale de musique le 6 décembre 1844. Paris, 1845.
- Le Songe d'une nuit d'été*, opéra-comique en 3 actes par MM. Rosier et de Leuven, musique de M. Ambroise Thomas, représenté pour la première fois, à Paris, sur le Théâtre de l'Opéra-Comique, le 20 avril 1850.
- Marie Stuart*, drame historique en 3 actes composé pour la Distribution de Prix et les récréations littéraires dans les Pensionnats de demoiselles par J. A. Guyet, Paris, 1851.
- Henri et Marie Stuart*, tragédie en 5 actes par M. Charles Rey (de l'Académie du Gard) Nîmes, 1852.
- La Comtesse de Leicester*, drame en 5 actes et en vers par P. Bergeron, docteur en philosophie et en lettres, ancien préfet des études, Professeur émérite de l'Université de Bruxelles, chevalier de l'ordre Ernest de Saxe-Cobourg-Gotha. Imprimerie Vanbuggenhault, Bruxelles, 1853.
- Marie Stuard*, essai tragique en 5 actes et en vers par Fs. D * (Dizac), Brive, 1856.
- Marie Stuart*, tragédie en 5 actes, Alger, 1862. Aux jeunes personnes du Pensionnat de Constantine dirigé par les religieuses de la doctrine chrétienne.
- Marie Stuart*, drame en 4 actes mêlés de chants à l'usage des pensionnats de demoiselles par l'abbé * * *. Paris, 1864.
- L'Anneau du Comte d'Essex*, drame en un acte en vers. (Veillées du Poète, Drames et Morceaux détachés) par Ali Vial de Sabigny, membre de l'union des poètes et de la société des travaux littéraires et artistiques. Paris, E. Dentu, 1865.
- Le Testament de la Reine Elisabeth*, drame historique à grand spectacle en 5 actes et 8 tableaux de MM. Eugène Nus et Alphonse Brot,

représenté pour la première fois sur le Théâtre de la Gaité le 14 mai 1867. Paris, Librairie Dramatique, 1867.

Le Comte d'Essex, drame historique en 5 actes par F. Couturier, représenté pour la première fois, sur le Théâtre impérial du Châtelet, le 4 mai 1868. Paris, E. Dentu, 1868.

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